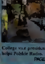
33rd Year — No 15

SPOKE

Conestoga College, Kitchener

APRIL 24, 2000

What's Inside



College vice president helps Polskie Radio.

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Black Rob's debut album has unique style

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COMMENTARY

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Senior drivers and accidents

Shorter semesters possible

By Ray Bowe

Conestoga College is looking into shortening semesters from 16 to 15 weeks in length.

The academic research and educational services is speaking to different groups within the school to determine their position.

"When we are looking at a major change like this, we want to listen to various subgroups," said Eleanor Conlin, chair of academic research and education services.

Such subgroups include the board of governors, the DSA, faculty, students and advisory committees.

According to Conlin, many colleges have already implemented a 15-week semester.

The 15-week semester has its pros and its cons.

Conlin said students would benefit by having more flexible schedules and it would allow more students to fast-track through a program.

With many schools offering week-terms, shorter semesters would allow students to enter the race for jobs at the same time as other college students.

A shorter semester would also give teachers extra time at the end of fall semesters leading up to Christmas. At this time there are exams, grading and discussions on whether or not a student is promoted to the next level of his or her program.

Conlin said some teachers work up until the Christmas Eve finishing up their work. Consequently, students are robbed of an acceptable appeals process if they wish to challenge their marks because the college breaks for a week's vacation at the end of December. This does not give students the chance to appeal before the next semester begins.

Conlin was quick to note that even if the college did decide to use 15 week scheduling, it wouldn't be immediate.

"If we're going to change, it's down the road, not overnight," Conlin said. "You need lead time."

Conlin said teachers would need at least a year to reorganize the curriculum. Publications and textbook printers would need a minimum of two years and external industries would need some notice of the changes.

There are several types of scheduling models to choose from, said Conlin, who is organizing several taken sessions with students to discuss the change to shorter semesters. The proposal has already been made to the DSA and board of governors.

After students are consulted, Conlin will approach faculty and middle management during May and June.

"At the end of the consultations we should have a clear picture," said Conlin.

She pointed out financial benefits to the school.

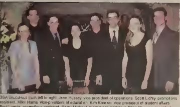
"We are always looking at economic gain," she added.

If students fast-track, the college can bring in more students more quickly plus retain more students who would then pick up courses they have missed.

The college receives governmental subsidies for every student who stays at the college.

DSA awards honour outstanding involvement

By Mike Radatus



DSA executives from left to right: Jenn Hussey, vice president of operations; Scott Linkly, promotions assistant; Mike Harris, vice-president of education; Kim Kroeker, vice president of student affairs; Paul Luquin, promotions assistant; Ramy Michael, promotions assistant; Ellen Menage, president; and Phil LeBeau, president elect.

(Photo by Mike Radatus)

The DSA's annual awards banquet honouring those who have contributed to the community of Conestoga College was held April 11 at the Golf Steak House in Kitchener.

The highest award presented by the DSA is in recognition and appreciation of outstanding leadership and involvement in college life. It was presented to Jenn Melnyk for her involvement in school activities.

The Allan Logan memorial award was presented to Chenh Lam.

The recipient of this award must demonstrate a warmth and responsibility in caring for and enriching the lives of students at Conestoga College.

The individual also must make a contribution to the college community though his/her initiatives and involvement in leadership activities at the college.

Nine people nominated Lam.

It was a record number of nominations.

People who nominated him had to write at least one page about him describing why they felt she should win the award.

Awards of distinction were presented to Steve Coleman, Erin Marshall, Leigh-Anne Smith, Patty Stokes, Brad Whiteford and Doug Johnston.

All the recipients are members of the college community except Stokes, who has recently found placement in her field of study, and Coleman, who will be returning to Conestoga College in September. All have made outstanding contributions to college life.

The executive award of recognition was presented to executive members for their contribution to student life at Conestoga College and for their successful completion of their term as members of the DSA executive.

Receiving the recognition were Ellen Menage, president of the DSA; Jenn Hussey, vice-president of operations; Michael Harris, vice-president of education; Kim Kroeker, vice president of student affairs; Scott Linkly, promotions assistant; Ramy Michael, promotions assistant; Phil LeBeau, promotions assistant; and Paul Luquin, promotions assistant.

Jack Fletcher, director of student services and the recreation centre and the college liaison for the DSA; Alyme Pannack, promotions co-ordinator; Janie Renwick, administrative assistant; and Marianne Sippel, bookkeeper, were also recognized for their contributions.

The excellence in customer service award was presented to Jostens, the photography company that does graduation photos for students at the college, for providing outstanding customer service for the DSA.

Certificates of appreciation were given to several students for their significant contributions to college life.

Other recipients of the certificate of appreciation include WalkSafe volunteers, several campus personnel members and departments within the college, associations and corporate partners.

Stronger student policies needed

For the sake of students, Conestoga College needs to establish a strong policy for student representation.

The Doon Student Association should not only deliver "pub nights" and "nooners" but also become a resource students can turn to if they experience difficulty with faculty.

In the event of a dispute, students may consult with a college counsellor in student services or they may approach the faculty directly involved, as outlined in the rights and responsibilities section of the college's 1999-2000 student procedures guide.

The guide also states that if the strategy above does not produce a satisfactory result, the faculty's supervisor should be approached. If this fails, the student can proceed to a formal appeal.

However, some students have approached the DSA with problems ranging from discrepancies in marks and tests to personality clashes.

"The DSA feels that the current policy is lacking and not up to college standard," says Mike Harris, DSA vice-president of education.

The DSA wants the complaint procedures to be made clearer, more concise and user friendly. They also want complaints to be dealt with in a reasonable amount of time.

"We have students coming to us all the time saying that procedures are vague and unclear," Harris said.

They also want a student to sit on appeal panels. Currently only faculty, counsellors and academic administration sit on appeal panels.

Tracy Boyer, executive-director for the Ontario Community College Student Parliamentary Association, said that students take on more involvement at other colleges.

"What I've seen at other colleges are student leaders getting involved in the complaint process," Boyer said. "We would like to see students involved in appeals."

In the past when Harris has gotten involved in student-teacher disputes, he has been told that the DSA shouldn't get involved.

For example, a student approached Harris concerning a problem she had with marks in a communications course and Harris mentioned it to the co-ordinator of communications in academic support.

Harris said he was told that the DSA should not intervene.

Heather Charles, co-ordinator of communications in academic support, said in an interview, "It's important to be aware that there is a formal process in place. If they feel comfortable speaking with teachers that's the best place to start and the process is set out in the student handbook."

Walter Boettger, president of the faculty union local at Conestoga, did not want to comment, saying that "ethics are involved."

But Harris's job description as vice-president stipulates that he encourage the evaluation of academic policies and procedures as well as grading practices of the college on behalf of the DSA. It also requires that he offer direction and/or assistance to students with requests for teacher evaluations, academic appeals, petitions and financial assistance.

Therefore the DSA wants the college to stipulate in the procedure guide that students may consult with the DSA as a resource as well as counsellors in student services when trying to resolve issues.

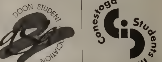
The DSA has discussed pros and cons of the proposal with Conestoga principal Grant McGregor and program deans and chairs. McGregor said he believes "the ideal role for the DSA is to act as a facilitator to show how the procedures work."

McGregor said the DSA should help students by making them aware of the process and by making them aware of the resources available at the college.

The college needs to amend the procedures to include the DSA as a resource for students in addition to counsellors from student services.

The procedures must be clear, concise and user friendly and the college should consider student representation on appeal panels.

$300 later, the DSA reveals its new logo . . .



Don't deny seniors

Sharri Osment

The issue of whether seniors should be allowed to drive has been given new life after recent fatal car accidents.

Beth Kidnie, 42, was struck by a car and dragged 700 metres in an April 4 accident that occurred in Etobicoke.

Pilar Hicks, 84, has been charged with careless driving and a criminal charge of failing to stop after an accident causing death.

Hannah Samuels, 13, of Burlington was pronounced dead on arrival at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital after she and her mother Tracey Smith, 34, were struck by a car in the parking lot of the Burlington Mall. The accident occurred on April 15.

The driver of the car was an 82-year-old motorist, whose name has not yet been released.

At this time senior drivers are not automatically required to pass a road test to have their licences renewed in Ontario.

Every two years, seniors must take vision and knowledge tests and participate in a 90-minute group education session. Seniors have to take a road test if a counsellor at the education session decides that one is necessary.

If seniors pass their bi-annual vision and knowledge tests and are either exempted from or pass their road test, I see no reason why they shouldn't be able to drive, regardless of their age.

Denying seniors their driving privileges because of their age would undermine their feelings of independence and self worth.

Advancing age does not automatically mean senility and decrepitude.

> According to statistics Canada, senior drivers are involved in approximately the same number of accidents as drivers between the ages of 16 and 24

However, according to a 1996-97 survey by Statistics Canada, 35 per cent of men and 75 per cent of women aged 75 and over who had a driver's licence, suffered from chronic arthritis or rheumatism. Such conditions can make maneuvers such as making sharp turns or merging with heavy traffic difficult.

At the time of this survey it was also noted that approximately half of the licence holders over the age of 75 were taking three or more medications. The use of multiple medications may cause impairment to an individual's ability to drive.

While I agree that testing of seniors' ability to operate motor vehicles is necessary, I believe that the system the Ministry of Transportation has in place regarding senior drivers is basically good.

However, relying on a counsellor to decide based on a 90-minute period of contact, whether or not a road test is required seems unreasonable to me. Mandatory road tests for seniors would help ensure that those on the road should be there.

Car accidents that result in death are always tragic but denying the freedom and independence of seniors would also be tragic.

According to a 1996 Statistics Canada survey, 60 per cent of seniors in rural areas were driving while only 46 per cent of those in urban areas were driving.

It is necessary for the seniors in rural areas to have their own method of transportation as public transit in those areas is nearly non-existent.

Canada's aging population does need to be monitored and tested regularly to ensure that those on the road are fit to be there. Judging drivers strictly by their age group is stereotyping.

An Ontario government study found that seniors are involved in approximately the same number of accidents as drivers between the ages of 16 and 24.

If people were to be denied the privilege of driving only because of their age, there would almost certainly be no drivers under the age of 25.

SPOKE Keeping Conestoga College connected

SPOKE is published and produced weekly by the journalism students of Conestoga College.
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Condor FM takes step forward

By Ray Bowe

Condor FM is one step closer to taking off.

Next on the agenda to get Conestoga College's new FM radio station up and running is the hiring of a station manager.

The college ran ads in the Kitchener Record last week in an attempt to fill this position and according to Mike Thurnell, co-ordinator of the broadcast - radio and television program, there have been responses.

The station manager, who is expected to be hired some time in June, will be responsible for making sure the voice of Conestoga, which will broadcast on 88.3 FM, is adhering to Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission regulations.

The manager is also responsible for administration and sales, which includes achieving target revenues and assisting in fund-raising events.

"The college is not going to shell out money to the station. The station has to stand on its own," said Thurnell.

After the station manager is hired the facility will be built, program scheduling will be completed and the station will be staffed. According to the CRTC licensing agreement, the station is designated as an instructional FM station.

"We'll have to live up to that commitment and requirements," said Thurnell.

The station will play mostly popular music including local talent, as well as jazz, classical and blues. Under CRTC regulations, the station must play at least 35 per cent Canadian content.

However, Pat St. John, vice-president of training and development and continuing education, said the station's Canadian content will be closer to 40 per cent.

"We wanted to go well above that," he said.

> "We're not here to compete with any stations, trying to steal listener numbers. We want quality."
>
> *Mike Thurnell, broadcast radio and television co-ordinator*

Thurnell said the station will give both journalism and broadcast students a venue to display their work. Thurnell added the station will be an excellent educational tool to produce newscasts, documentaries and features.

Condor FM will utilize the 4,000-watt Global tower located in Paris, Ont., the highest tower in Ontario, to transmit its signal. The signal will be strong enough to reach listeners from Mount Forest to Stratford, Mississauga and out into Lake Erie.

"The signal covers our service area perfectly," said St. John.

St. John said he has received a call from a station manager from a radio station located in Buffalo, N.Y., which broadcasts on 88.5 FM, who is concerned that the two stations' signals may mix.

St. John was quick to point out that the problem would only be at the Buffalo end and not a problem for the college. However, it won't be known whether there is a problem until the station is on the air.

The station broadcasts will include campus news and community and multicultural groups are already seeking involvement.

St. John said he has been approached by a Portuguese group in Cambridge and an Italian group in Guelph who are interested in doing weekly shows on the new station.

Under CRTC regulations, the station must have at least three hours of cultural programming per week, but St. John said Condor FM will be well above the criteria.

In addition to a station manager, a program manager must also be hired. The program manager's job is to organize students and volunteers as well as publish news logs and music schedules. The target date for hiring a program manager is September.

Thurnell expects the station to be on the air in late fall, but no clear date has been set.

"We're not here to compete with any stations, trying to steal listener numbers," said Thurnell. "We want quality."

Attention

In our continuing effort to serve our readers, Spoke asks that anyone who notices an error in stories or cutlines please report the errors to.

Sharon Dietz
Faculty adviser of Spoke
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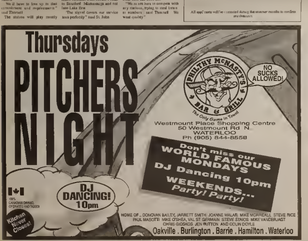
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Accent prevents student's acceptance at UW

By Laura Czekaj

A Conestoga College student who is one course away from graduating from the recreation and leisure services program says she was denied admission to the University of Waterloo because of her accent.

The student's plight was addressed during the April 10 College Council meeting when Greg Burns, co-ordinator of the recreation and leisure services program, told the council that the student had been told during a phone call with a UW admissions officer that she didn't meet language requirements.

He said the student, who would prefer to remain anonymous, originates from Cyprus and has a heavy accent. However he said she has completed three communication courses at the college, a theory course, a writing course and a verbal course and she received 75 to 80 per cent in each course.

He also added that in her recreation and leisure courses she maintains a 75 to 80 per cent average.

Peter Burroughs, director of admissions at UW, said students with English as their second language or students who have not studied in Canada or at a school where English is the language of instruction for five years or more are required to complete an International English Language Test before being accepted.

He also said that it is too difficult for the university to assess the different English courses offered at all the colleges and universities to determine whether the course meets UW's English language requirements.

> "The university won't give credit to students in the community"
>
> *Greg Burns*
> *co-ordinator of the recreation and leisure services program*

Burns said the student has a heavy accent, but in her three years taking part-time courses to get her recreation and leisure services diploma her English has improved greatly.

He said that the student's dream is to complete her courses at Conestoga then move on to get a bachelor of arts at UW and she was upset by the rejection.

"She broke into tears in my office!" he said.

He said that he felt insulted by UW's rejection of the student because he questions why the university is making her take the IELTS test when she has completed English courses at Conestoga.

Monica Himmelman, associate faculty for the community services programs and the student's teacher in her lifespan development class, said the student is conscientious and intelligent.

Himmelman attributes the student's failure to get into UW to the university's perception that she lacks language skills.

Burns said he has been through this with other students and UW's impression of the college is jaundiced.

"The university won't give credit to students in the community but the same students are welcome with open arms at Brock University," he said.

Brock places more value on college credits than UW when it comes to applying them toward a university degree.

Conestoga College president John Tibbits commented at the council meeting: "We can't leave it in the hands of individual admissions officers to determine the value of a college education."

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V.P. advises Polskie Radio

By Laura Czekaj

Conestoga College went international when Pat St. John, vice president of training and development and continuing education, represented the college at training sessions for Polskie Radio in Poland.

St. John was chosen to go to Poland because of his 25-year experience in the broadcasting field. He went to help with the restructuring of Polskie Radio, the country's broadcasting system. The radio station is finding itself in jeopardy due to a recent emergence of competition.

Conestoga rose to the challenge when Polish authorities requested proposals from colleges and universities in Ontario with established communications programs to assist the ailing radio station with management and program delivery, technical assistance, development of a capacity for training employees and assistance in acquiring the skills required to implement new technology.

Conestoga's proposal was selected from among nine other entries shortly before Christmas.

St. John left for Poland on March 18 and returned March 27.

The sessions were held in Warsaw and lasted three days. They focused on consulting and management training for Polskie Radio management and staff.

With the fall of communism, new radio stations are gaining popularity in the country, radio stations that St. John says, ironically, sound like North American radio stations.

"Working through this process with them we did learn a lot, but they aren't sure why their ratings are falling so dramatically," he said.

St. John was the only Canadian at the training sessions and he said the college's participation in this event is a great opportunity for students and faculty.

"Students could go over there on student exchange or co-op programs and faculty could go to deliver specific seminars," he said.

He added Polskie Radio representatives seemed supportive of the college sending students to Poland to gain work experience.

St. John's next step is to write a paper to the radio's supervisory board and Poland's president that addresses the issue of restructuring effectively.

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Conestoga College

Students find ways to combat exam stress

By Sherri Osment

A random survey on April 14 showed students at Conestoga College use a variety of methods when dealing with the stress of exams.

Taylor Surman, a first year broadcast radio and television student, said she goes out with friends often to help with exam stress.

"I spend a lot of time outside and realize it'll all be over soon," said Surman.

Triggerson

Helen Triggerson, a first year LASA student, said she tries to get enough sleep, study often and get organized.

"Around exam time is when I start getting organized," said Triggerson, who added she jokes around with people who are going through the same thing as a way to keep stress levels down.

Rosalind Eidt, a second-year marketing student, said the hardest part of exams is getting organized. She likes to think of one exam at a time.

"When I think about it one at a time, it's not overly stressful," said Eidt.

Dunat

Curtis Dunat, a second year broadcast radio and television student, said that screaming into a pillow helps relieve his exam stress. Dunat also said listening to music and playing Nintendo are relaxing.

"I make time for myself," said Dunat, "at least an hour every day."

Colleen Shipley, a first year LASA student, said she thinks of exams as if they are just tests.

"I don't get stressed out until I'm done," said Shipley. She added that riding her horse is a way for her to relax.

Montesinos

Andrew Montesinos, a first year general business student, said he makes sure to get out for drinks with good friends who permit him to vent his frustrations.

Steven Fitton, a first year business administration student, said he tries to study and get prepared for his exams.

"I try and forget about it sometimes," said Fitton. "If exams are all you think about you get nervous."

"I'm just going to study," said Gallard. "I can't get too worked up about it."

Robert

Nick Robert, a second year LASA student, said that he copes with exam stress by studying and by going out to bars to party.

"You have to have a study break once in a while," said Robert.

Dates set for summer Convocation

The Academic Operations Committee of Conestoga College has approved dates and times for the 32nd Convocation ceremonies to be held in June.

There will be a total of three ceremonies.

Two are on Wednesday June 21 beginning at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The other ceremony will be on Thursday June 22 starting at 7 p.m.

Although assignment of schools, programs, and divisions will not occur until some time in April, one of the three ceremonies will be primarily for the school of business, one for health sciences and community services and one for technology and trades.

Guest speakers have been booked for the ceremonies.

Perrin Beatty, former federal cabinet minister and former CBC president, will be speaking at the business graduation. Lynn Haddrall, editor of The Record in Kitchener, will speak at the health sciences/community services graduation and John Bell, CEO of Polymer Technologies, will speak at the technology ceremony.

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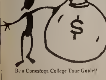

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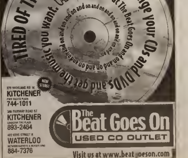
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Painting the life on the street

By Mike Radatus

"Puffy" Combs boyfriend of Jennifer Lopez, has proven he has more than just good taste in women. He also has good taste in up-and-coming rap artists.

Black Rob's debut album Life Story released on Bad Boy Records is produced by Combs. The album has a unique style of raw lyrics that describe the hard time of his life while growing up in the hood.

His singles such as I Dare You give the album a familiar feeling, but this song is not the only one that has any depth.

The most powerful element of the CD is that it is truly a record you can listen to from start to finish. It runs through with hypnotic beats and grooves only to break out with a fast gangster-styled beat.

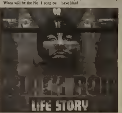
Whoa will be the No. 1 song on the album. It is a raw bouncy song that has lyrics that people want to sing. Every time Black Rob says Whoa, which is said often, people find themselves saying it too.

Though the album is an honest portrait of a hard life in a poor atmosphere, not everybody will go for it.

People are getting sick of exaggerated stories pointing out how hard life can be. In one song he talks about how he had to live in old theatres and couldn't take showers.

To some it could be a message to never give up, but others will be less than impressed.

The album is a solid piece of work. Combs, a man who knows what people want to hear, has produced a high quality album, but it may be targeted to a smaller audience of people than Black Rob may have liked.



The front cover of the latest Black Rob CD, now available in stores.

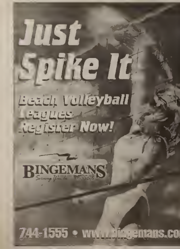
COUNSELLOR'S CORNER: Graduation

For many of you, the end of this semester represents the end of your current studies at Conestoga College. You may be ready to begin a new career or ongoing studies. You may be planning to move to a new city or to travel. This transition will be a welcome relief from studying, projects, late nights, and too short days.

You should feel proud of your accomplishments. You have reached a goal that seemed so far away when you began. Sometimes, you may experience anxiety or doubts: the life you have known is about to change, and you aren't exactly sure what the next part of your life will look like. There may be sadness as you leave behind friendships and support systems. You might even miss teachers who have been mentors to you. If you remember back to your first semester here, you may have had many of these same feelings, but with time you developed new relationships and opened up to new experiences.

So, as you graduate, take away the gifts of a College diploma: new skills, and confidence in your achievements. Congratulations!

A Message from Student Services (Room 2B02)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Quantity outweighs quality as Condors lose

By Sherri Osment

The Conestoga College women's indoor soccer league finals ended in a 3-2 defeat for the Condors when they played the Alumni team on April 11 at the Conestoga College recreation centre.

The Alumni were leading by one goal at the end of the first half.

The second Alumni goal came within minutes of the start of the second half.

Daniela Sirio scored the first Condor goal.

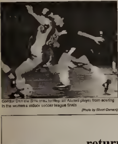
The Condors managed to tie the score with a second goal. This one was scored by Diana Jallali and she was assisted by Angela Papazotos.

The Alumni team managed to get another goal and kept the Condors from scoring again.

Condors head coach Geoff Johnstone said he is proud of the Condors and is sorry the season is over as the team has come a long way.

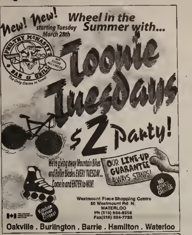
Johnstone said the Alumni is a very classy team but he felt that the game was even.

"Our goals were better than theirs but it's quantity not quality that counts," Johnstone said.



Condor Daniela Sirio tries to stop an Alumni player from scoring in the women's indoor soccer league finals.

(Photo by Sherri Osment)



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